



USCRTF VOTING MEMBERS

Co-chairs

U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA

U.S. Department of the Interior

Federal Agencies

U.S. Agency for International Development

U.S. Department of Agriculture

U.S. Department of Defense

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Department of Transportation

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

National Science Foundation

States and Territories

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

State of Florida

State of Hawai'i

Territory of American Samoa

Territory of Guam

Territory of U.S. Virgin Islands

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Federated States of Micronesia

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Republic of Palau

Working to Preserve *and* Protect Coral Reef Ecosystems

Coral reefs are one of the world's most biologically diverse ecosystems. While only covering about 1/10th of 1 percent of the ocean floor, they provide habitat for over 25 percent of all marine species. Not only do coral reefs house enormous biodiversity, they also provide economic and environmental services to millions of people as sources of food, income, coastal protection, and recreation.

Coral reefs are deteriorating at alarming rates. Climate change, pollution, sedimentation, destructive fishing practices and coastal development are just a few human-induced causes of reef destruction. It is estimated that 70 percent of the world's coral reefs are threatened, and 20 percent of those are damaged beyond repair.

The United States Coral Reef Task Force

The United States Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) was established in 1998 by Presidential Executive Order to lead U.S. efforts to preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. The USCRTF includes leaders of 12 Federal agencies, seven U.S. states, territories, commonwealths, and three Freely Associated States. The USCRTF helps build partnerships, strategies, and support for on-the-ground action to conserve coral reefs.

National Action Plan: How We Preserve and Protect Our Reefs

In 2000, the USCRTF adopted the National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs. The National Action Plan identifies two fundamental themes and 13 conservation strategies (goals) for immediate and sustained national action to more effectively understand coral reef ecosystems and reduce the adverse impacts of human activities.

Coral reefs cover only about 1/10 of 1 percent of the ocean floor, but provide habitat for over 25 percent of all marine species.

Accomplishments

Key accomplishments of the USCRTF in advancing the goals of the National Action Plan include:

- *Mapping 6,340 square kilometers of U.S. shallow water coral reef ecosystems (<30 meters)*
- *Reporting on monitoring activities and reef health in The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the United States and Pacific Freely Associated States (3 reports released in 2002, 2005, & 2008)*
- *Developing Local Action Strategies (LAS) in each jurisdiction that identify local needs and implement actions for addressing key threats to coral reef ecosystems*
- *Creating the Coral Disease and Health Consortium (CDHC) to research the causes of and solutions to disease and other threats impacting coral reef ecosystems*
- *Publishing A Reef Manager's Guide to Coral Bleaching*
- *Assessing jurisdiction efforts to protect coral reef ecosystems through the use of marine protected areas*
- *Conducting coral reef economic valuation studies in each jurisdiction*

Meeting the Challenges Ahead

In addition to addressing the 13 conservation strategies for immediate and sustained national action, the USCRTF has identified the following as key actions for the near future:

- *Increase use of Local Action Strategies and engagement of USCRTF members to respond to local priorities for coral reef conservation*
- *Increase relevant management actions based on sound science to address the impacts of climate change on coral reef ecosystems*
- *Continue to address the impacts of land-based sources of pollution as a means of removing or limiting a controllable threat to coral reefs*
- *Enhance management, education, and enforcement related to fishing impacts*
- *Enhance international cooperation and information-sharing efforts*



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN: HOW WE PRESERVE AND PROTECT OUR REEFS

THEME 1

UNDERSTAND CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS

Goal 1

Create comprehensive maps of all U.S. coral reef habitats

Goal 2

Conduct long-term monitoring and assessments of reef ecosystem conditions

Goal 3

Support strategic research to address the major threats to reef ecosystems

Goal 4

Increase understanding of the social and economic factors of conserving coral reefs

THEME 2

REDUCE THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY

Goal 5

Improve the use of marine protected areas to reduce threats

Goal 6

Reduce adverse impacts of fishing and other extractive uses

Goal 7

Reduce impacts of coral uses

Goal 8

Reduce pollution

Goal 9

Restore damaged reefs

Goal 10

Improve education and outreach

Goal 11

Reduce international threats to coral reef ecosystems

Goal 12

Reduce impacts from international trade in coral reef species

Goal 13

Improve coordination and accountability